

**Believest Thou This? (John 11:20-26)**

**Proposition:** Every follower of the Lord Jesus must believe certain truths about Jesus, before we are ever faced with a Bethany crisis.

- I. **Jesus Recognizes the Troubles of Life (Vs. 21)**
  - A. He Recognizes Despite the Distance (Vs. 21, 3)
  - B. He Recognizes Despite the Delay (Vs. 6)
  - C. He Recognizes Despite the Death (Vs. 11b-15)
- II. **Jesus Reverses the Terms of Life (Vs. 21-26)**
  - A. The Set Terms of Life (Vs. 21, 24)
  - B. The Sovereign Terms of Life (Vs. 25-26)
- III. **Jesus Represents the Triumph of Life (Vs. 23-24)**
  - A. A Present Triumph (Vs. 24)
  - B. A Personal Triumph (Vs. 25)

## Believest Thou This (John 11:20-26)

In that bazaar of spiritual truth  
cladician Jones and the Last Crusade,  
Jones faced a crisis of belief. In order  
to force Jones to retrieve the holy grail  
the evil Nazi leader mortally woun-  
ded, clutching Henry. The evil  
shooter said, "The Healing power  
of the grail is the only thing that can  
help him. It's time to ask yourself  
what do you believe?" Here in the  
reality of our text Jesus poses a  
similar question to Martha. Believest  
Thou This? She had come to a point  
of life and death desolation, and acc-  
ording to Jesus the only thing that mat-  
ters was what she believed. C.S. Lewis  
said it best "You never know how much  
you really believe anything until its  
truth or falsehood becomes a matter of  
life and death to you" Just like Marth-  
a in Jn 11, there are going to come those  
Belshazzar crises, where you are going to be  
asked "Believest Thou This?" Every follower  
of the Lord Jesus must believe certain truths.

### I. Jesus Recognizes the Troubles of Life

In v50, Martha comes running up to Jesus  
and at 21 tells him a thing or two. Tom Hays  
would translate it "Where have you been"  
She runs out of breath and just

Why weren't you here? Don't you care? Have you ever got in?

A. He Recognizes despite the Distance - Mark  
in 31 said... She's right. If Jesus had been  
there, he wouldn't have died. Nobody dies or  
stays dead very long when Jesus is around. Mark  
had a problem w/ Jesus location. Vs 3 when Jesus  
got word, he was in an isolated region called Perea.  
on the other side of Jordan 2 days Journey. Mark  
thought because he wasn't right there, he didn't know/care

B. He Recognizes despite the Delay - Vs 6  
Upon receiving this news, Jesus didn't  
pack up and catch the first bus to Bethay  
No, He delayed. Because he caught grief from  
Martha on this tardiness. She believed  
that Jesus could have done something <sup>about</sup>  
all this, it's just that he's behind schedule.  
He's not working on my time table. Sound familiar?

C. He Recognizes despite the Death -  
Vs 11b-15. Martha's whole point of contention  
is that Lazarus is dead. It's too late. Jesus  
he's already dead. We've passed the point  
of no return, there's no helping us  
now you're too distant, too delayed and  
He's too dead. Jesus knew full well of His condition  
And what martha is about to find out is what you

II. Jesus Reverses the Terms of Life -  
Philosophers down through time have  
taken terms like life and death and tried  
to define them to give some sort of meaning  
behind them. But here in these brief words,

1) ...truths about him, before we are ever faced with a Bethany crisis.

2) ...know or care but in vs. 4 Jesus knew full well what was going on. Oh so many times, I've wondered in the middle of my crisis, God where are you, you seem so distant! But despite the seeming distance, He knows what is happening in your trial. He has His finger on the pulse of your trouble even at a distance.

3) ...is what you and I need to carry out of this room is that He may seem be delayed but He is still divine. He may seem aloof but He is still the Almighty. The British preacher of a past generation, F.B. Meyer, in his book on John's gospel, said "He sits as a refiner of silver. He knows our sorrows. He is acquainted with our grief...And when He comes He does more than we asked or thought. He raises not the sick, but the dead."

What do you think Jesus' message is about? (1)

...say

Jesus' message is about people being good & trying their best to work. (5)

People are to live a good life & be good & not do bad things.

Self-sacrifice, self-control or more love over the world.

Self-sacrifice, self-control & living better & more for others.

Sacrifice, to have actions ready to serve others & help each other.

- 1) ...by saying the prevailing thought is that, "Life's a PAIN, and then you die." And that is the belief of many in our world today.

In 1971, former Beatle, John Lennon, released a solo album called *Imagine*, the title track of that album opened with the line: Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try, No hell below us, Above us only sky.

- 2) The former king of England, known as Edward the Confessor, said just before he passed away, "Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living." Jesus is telling Martha you've got it all backwards. You're in the land of the dying. Lazarus is in the land of the living! When we come to life and death moments in life, what are you going to believe? John Lennon's imagination or Jesus Christ's resurrection!

Jesus takes these terms and reuses them <sup>their head</sup> ~~stand behind~~

### A. The Set Terms of Life - in Vs 1

Martha uncovers a startling viewpoint of life. The air going in and out of Lazarus body the blood that was flowing through his veins indicated life. Despite a belief in some future far off resurrection (Vs 24) basically as far as her definition of life was it was all over. Marthas set terms of life are shared w/ many others. You only live once "they say, I remember a theologian professor who tried to sum up the OT by saying"

### B. The Sovereign Terms of Life - But

in Vs 25-26, we find Jesus giving the sovereign terms of life and death. You see Jesus is express the truth that life is more than a pulse and a breath, a brain wave and a knee jerk! There is a head to head conflict here. Martha says He's dead. Jesus says he's alive! Lazarus body may have ceased to function, but he lived on in another place We that believe on Him may go through the pangs of death, yet we shall live on past the bounds of this mortal coil. The former King

### III. Jesus Represents the Triumph of Our Life

Vs 23-24. Now both Martha and Jesus are discussing the hope that Lazarus had Martha is saying "he shall" Jesus is

to the future and Jesus is standing triumphantly

A. A Present Triumph - Now lets give it to Martha she did have faith that Jesus could heal her brother, its just that he wasnt there in time. And Martha had a future faith, yet in the resuscitation he will rise, but that mattered little in the present. She had some theology, she knew her Clarence Larkin + Tim LaHaye prophetic charts of future events. But had no present hope for the nasty news now. Like most of us, Christianity will help me in the end. ~~I long~~ to heaven. We look at our faith as an IRA or

B. A Personal Triumph - v324-25  
As Martha looked off in the distance in verse 24, Jesus is presenting himself as a present Solution. Martha had placed her hope in something that would happen some day. But Jesus is saying your hope is not someday it is done now. Martha I am the fulfillment of your hopes and dreams. I am your personal triumph. You see if you have placed your trust in Jesus you are not waiting for ~~someday~~ something you are living for someone. Warren Wiersbe

IV. Closing - You know the story. Jesus will cry and call for Lazarus. I wonder if this question pierced the heart of Martha. Its a question that we ought to ask ourselves, what do you believe about Him.

- 1) ...IRA or a 401K and not a checking account. Jesus is the triumph not only at the consummation of time and eternity. He is the triumph for Monday morning on the way to work! I Am! As one author put it: Martha's faith loved to sing Farther Along, but her faith was flawed because it had not yet learned to sing: Day by day, and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here. We can have a daily triumphant life with the ever present Jesus!
- 2) Warren Wiersbe says, "When you are sick, you want a doctor and not a medical book or a formula. When you are being sued, you want a lawyer and not a law book. Likewise, when you face your last enemy, death, you want a Savior and not a doctrine written in a book." Marthas personal triumph was found in the person of Jesus!